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**Rural youth, agriculture and access to land:
The Case of Madagascar**

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Abstract

Every year, about 250,000 rural youth integrate the labour market. They could engage in agriculture that holds a huge potential, but to that end, they face many challenges, and above all, they need a secure land access. Based on qualitative and quantitative data from surveys of 1,800 households residing in 9 communes of Madagascar, this paper analyses the profile of rural youth, their perception of farmer job, their land access and the constraints which limit their integration in agriculture. It highlights that young households have small land areas with respect to their elders (1.5 ha on average against 2.6 ha) because of more constrained access to land. Indeed, one-third of young households do not inherit land, more than a half buy land and having access to cleared land is more and more difficult. Attached to their territory and rooted in local social networks, they are calling for policies that support the development of their activities and access to land at local level.

Key words: Rural youth, agriculture, land, access, certification, Madagascar

Résumé

Chaque année à Madagascar, 250 000 jeunes ruraux arrivent sur le marché du travail. Ces jeunes pourraient s'investir dans l'agriculture, forte d'un énorme potentiel mais pour cela, ils doivent surmonter de nombreuses contraintes et, surtout, accéder au foncier. Sur la base d'enquêtes qualitatives et quantitative auprès de 1800 ménages dans 9 communes de l'île, cet article analyse le profil des jeunes ruraux, leur perception du métier d'agriculteur, leur mode d'accès au foncier ainsi que les contraintes qui limitent leur insertion dans l'agriculture. Il met en exergue que les jeunes ménages disposent de superficies moindres que leurs aînés (1,5 ha en moyenne contre 2,6 ha) du fait d'un accès au foncier plus contraint : 40% des jeunes ménages n'héritent pas de terre de leurs familles, 56% constituent leur patrimoine en ayant recours au marché foncier, et la mise en valeur de nouvelle terre est de plus en plus difficile. Attachés à leur territoire et ancrés dans les réseaux sociaux locaux, ils sont en demande de politiques les appuyant dans le développement de leurs activités et de l'accès au foncier au niveau local.

Mots clés : Jeunes ruraux, agriculture, foncier, accès, certification, Madagascar

1. Introduction

In Madagascar, young people under 18 represent more than half of the 20 million inhabitants. More specifically, youth between the age of 15 and 24 are one-fifth of the population and one-third of the workforce. With an annual population growth of 2.4% for this age group, they will reach 6 million by 2025. The large majority (75% of youth between 15 and 29) live in rural areas and they emerge as key actors of Madagascar's development. Indeed, about 250,000 rural youth integrate the labour market every year. They could engage in agriculture that holds a huge potential (INJ, 2008-2010; Randrianarison et al., 2009; INSTAT & ICF Macro, 2010; BIT & INSTAT, 2014; World Bank, 2014). To that end, they face many challenges, and above all, they need a secure land access. At national level, the average farm size is 0.87 hectare (MAEP, 2007). With increasing population growth and land pressure, they may have more and more difficulties to access to adequate land in terms of quantity and quality. In such a land context, what the future holds for rural youth in agriculture?

This paper¹ analyses the profile of rural youth, their perception of farmer job, their land access and the constraints which limit their integration in agriculture. It concludes with some recommendations to better address issues of rural youth, notably those related to land.

2. Methodology

The analyses are based on quantitative data from a survey of 1,862 rural households residing in 9 communes of Madagascar² realized in 2011 (in the rest of the text, the survey is referred under the acronym PECF – cf. Burnod et al., 2014). The analysis also value the results of a qualitative survey, focused on youth, conducted in 2014 in one of the 9 communes - Ambohimiarivo, which is located in Vakinankaratra region, on the highlands.

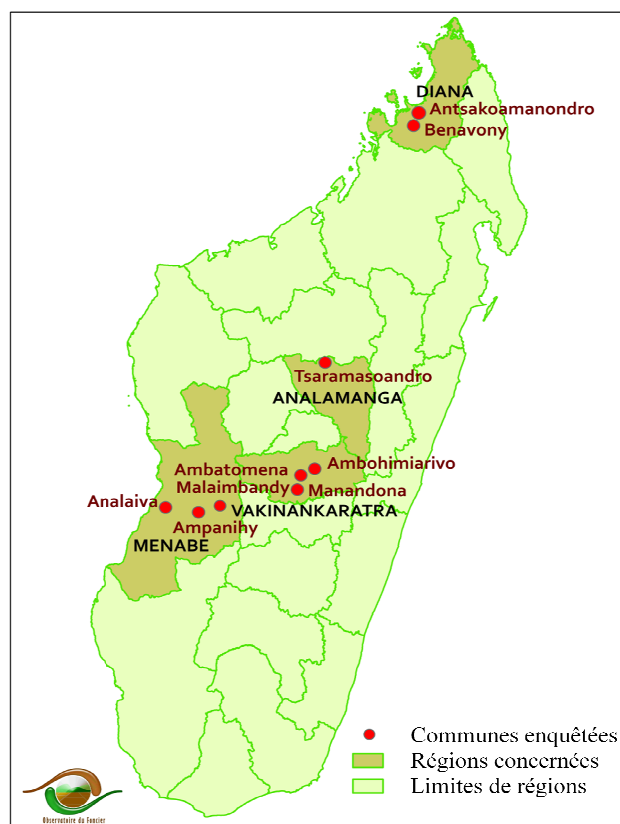
The PECF survey was carried out to evaluate the Perception and Effects of land Certification (PECF in French). This research has been realized by the Land Observatory in Madagascar, CIRAD and DIAL (IRD). The 4 regions and 9 communes were non-randomly chosen to get information and carry out analyses in contrasting contexts: in terms of population, geography, history and activities of the local land office – newly established since the 2005 land reform – that deliver land certificates to legally formalize private property.

In each commune, before conducting household surveys, investigators run a collective interview with some people in the commune (the communal team, the local land officer, shopkeepers, farmers; including a total of a dozen men and women).

¹ Key facts of the research developed here by the Land Observatory and Cirad has been summarized in a policy brief supported by JOBS Knowledge Platform (JKP), Development Policy Research Unit (DPRU), World Bank and PLAAS.

² Four communes are located in two regions of highlands (Analamanga and Vakinankaratra) and five in two coastal regions (Diana and Menabe).

In each commune, 200 households were randomly chosen³ and surveyed. Thus, the database provides information about 1,862 households and 7,697 plots. Analyses rely partly on statistical treatments realized by Sarah Deschênes (cf. Deschênes, 2014) and Heriniaina Rakotomalala.



Map 1: Location of studied communes

All results are representative at the level of the studied communes. They simply illustrate significant facts at the country level.

The qualitative survey conducted in 2014 has enabled to develop youth's position on agriculture and precise some points raised by the PECF study. Data were collected in focus group discussions with youth, focus group and individual interviews with seniors (municipal leaders, educators, farmers' association leaders, responsible of rural development organizations).

3. Who are young rural Malagasy people?

...youth between the ages of 14-35, or even 40. According to Madagascar's National Youth Policy, youth is defined as individuals aged 14-35 years. However, according to respondents

³ Households engaged in the certification process were overrepresented (and identified by a random draw in the register of land certificate applications). Other households were randomly chosen on field (by surveying for example inhabitants of every fourth house). All data presented in the study were weighted.

in Ambohimiarivo, the upper-age limit of youth is set at 40 years, because « youth persists as long as the person has optimal physical condition to work the land». In the following analysis, youth is defined as individuals aged 14-35 years.

...living in their parents' home or sharing the family home. In the PECF survey, the majority of young people live with their parents or extended families until the age of 25⁴. Young men, in particular, are living longer in their parents' home; young women married younger (Deschênes, 2014).

Over half of young heads of households are between the age of 20 and 30 and 41% between 31 and 35 (

Figure 1). If some of them are married very early, before age 19, the majority seems to start a union later, confirming a trend observed since the 1990's⁵ (Binet and Gastineau, 2008). In the 9 studied communes, a quarter of households are headed by young people (26.5%). However, being married doesn't mean enjoying a full independence. A quarter of young heads of households, their spouses and children share the parents' home, and consequently, pool a portion of the crops produced, kitchen activities, etc.⁶

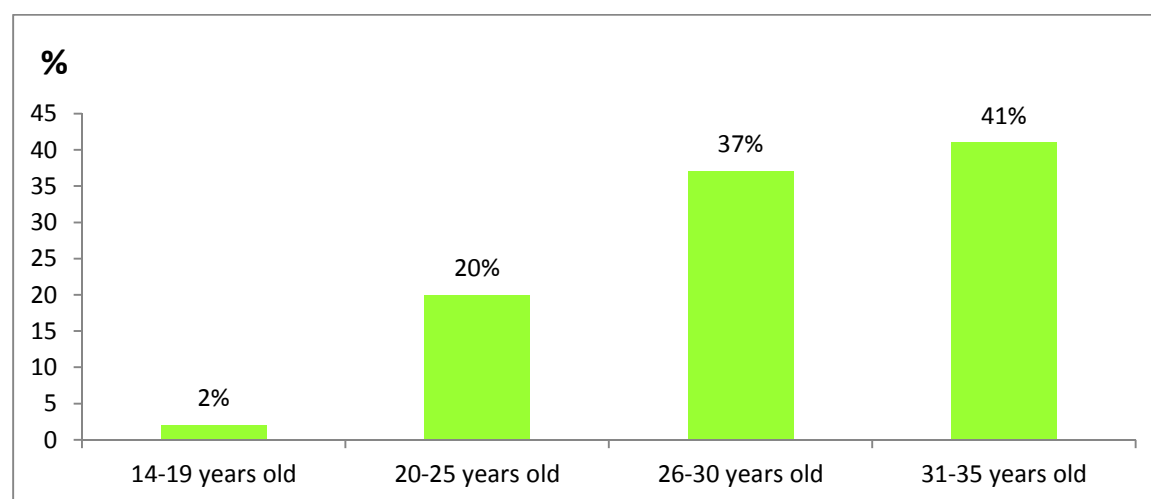


Figure 1: Distribution of young households by age of the head

...an early entry into active life. Also according to PECF survey, 68% of rural youth are already economically active and nearly half of them are still minors (42% are between 14 and 19 years of age) (Deschênes, 2014). Rural youth drop out of school very early, often by lack of school facilities, but above all to integrate the labor market and alleviate parents' economic

⁴ 95% of 14-19 years and 72% of 20-25 years, against 33% of 26-30 years and 15% of 31-35 years.

⁵ The causes mentioned: impact of successive economic crises, development of schooling, opening up rural regions and land pressure (traditional marriage, motivated by land acquisition in some regions, becomes less urgent in a context of land scarcity).

⁶ 25% of youth do not own a housing plot because, as frequently observed in the field, they live in the family home (belonging to their parents or other ascendants).

hardship (Courty and Rakoto-Tiana, 2010). Hence, and even if young people are nowadays more educated than their parents (BIT, INSTAT, 2014), they still have a low level of education (PECF data). Indeed, 55% of households heads aged 14 to 35 did not go beyond the primary school... and 30% never attended school at all.

...young heads of households are farmers but poorer than their elders. More than 90% of young household heads are engaged in agriculture as their main activity; and 44%, in breeding as secondary activity. In decreasing order, households undertake poultry farming (92%), have work oxen (60%) or invest in cattle (55%), pig (30%) or sheep and goats (15%)⁷. As secondary activity, they also practice fishing, have a small store or sell their labor force on a daily basis (around 5%).

According to indicators for measuring household's wealth, related to assets held by households on the one hand, and to the nature and housing quality on the other hand, the young heads of households are poorer than their elders. And, the younger they are, the poorer they are (Deschênes, 2014). In the 9 studied communes, the young household heads earn from sales of agricultural products about USD 5 per week⁸, less than half of the legal minimum wage in agriculture⁹. Without taking account the on-farm consumption or income from secondary activities, a young farmer earns 3.8 times less than a young public officer and 1.5 times less than a young storekeeper in rural areas. They offset these insufficient incomes thanks to other economic activities (according to PECF data, breeding generates an average of USD 10 per week).

4. What perception do rural youth have about being a farmer?¹⁰

...A farmer is the one that cultivates to ensure household's food security. For youth in Ambohimiarivo, working land is the basis of agriculture. Farmer is one who cultivates, whether he is landowner, sharecropper, tenant or land borrower. For them, being a farmer means first of all ensuring the family food security. It then means supplying the markets with surplus production; in order to reinvest the income from sales in agricultural activities and to meet the family and social obligations.

...Being a farmer is not the initial choice. For the interviewed young people, becoming a farmer does not result from a deliberated choice but follows from a transmission of family business. Moreover, they lack economic alternatives due to their low levels of qualifications and the limited opportunities existing at the local level. Even if they have not any agricultural

⁷ With strong variations at the *commune* level, on average, young households have 1 pork, 1 to 2 oxen, 1 to 2 cows on the highlands against 6 to 12 in the Menabe, a privileged area for extensive cattle breeding.

⁸ Rate: USD 1 = MGA 2,400.

⁹ The Malagasy law sets out the starting minimum wage in the agricultural sector at USD 13 per week (Decree #2014-305).

¹⁰ This section refers to data collected during the focus group with youth in Ambohimiarivo.

vocation¹¹, most of youth prefer becoming farmer and trying to develop secondary activities (masonry, mechanics, sewing, basketry). They also expect improvements in the socio-economic and political environment to remove the constraints on them (cf. infra).

...A difficult job at a low wage. For youth in Ambohimiarivo, agriculture is synonymous with hard work. It requires physical strength and a strong will to cope with climatic risks and tiring working hours during agricultural seasons. Besides, it's a low-paying job. According to few seniors interviewed, agriculture is becoming less and less profitable for almost 30 years. « Land is less fertile, likely due to climate instability and overexploitation of agricultural land. Youth have to buy fertilizers and pesticide in order to achieve satisfactory yields. Because of this soil fertility crisis and limited land available within the family, I cannot blame my grandchildren. None became farmer. Some of them left and gone to the city; others remained in the village but engaged in non-farming activities» (Rakotondravony, 73 years-old, 9 children, 20 grandchildren).

5. How do youth access to land?

...a majority of young people owners of agricultural land. In the 9 studied communes, 74% of young households own a housing plot and 94% at least one agricultural plot¹².

The « landless » represent only 6% of young households but among them... two-thirds are farmers. Among these landless farmers: 36% rent or borrow land, 34% can crop around their house (more than 0.5ha) and 41% rely on livestock.

However, if youth declare themselves as land owners, it is not systematically the reality. As in many developing countries (Punch, 2002; White, 2012; Brooks et al., 2013), youth acquire land mostly through inheritance (65.7% of the young households in PECF). In general, youth has use rights on one plot (rarely more) once they start a union but they fully inherit belatedly, when their parents become too old to manage them, even when they pass away. Seniors in Ambohimiarivo explain that such practise allows on the one hand, that parents benefit from the family land until they die (youth have to meet their family obligations to enjoy the land use rights), and on the other hand, that children do not sell the family patrimony to meet urgent financial needs.

...Smaller land areas with respect to their elders. Regardless of the mode of land acquisition, young household's heads have smaller plots than their elders. Youth own, on average, 1.5 ha and seniors 2.16 ha... but ratios in terms of hectares per household member

¹¹ Instead of agriculture, young men surveyed would choose as primary activity masonry or mechanics and young women, sewing or handcraft (basketry).

¹² Young heads of households have, on average, the equivalent of 3.26 plots but nearly 40% have only 2 plots (of which very often a built-up one for the most of them) (Deschênes, 2014).

are similar (0.42 ha per person – knowing that the average size of households is 4.51 persons for youth, 5.80 for seniors) (Deschênes, 2014).

These averages hide high disparities within young households. Overall, one-third of young households have less than 0.5 ha, one-third between 0.5 and 1.5 ha and one-third more than 1.5 ha (Figure 2). This disparity seems to result more from different land access than the age¹³. Youth get smaller plots acquired due to a land fragmentation following inheritances, limited purchasing power restricting the area of purchased land, or a land saturation preventing land access by clearing.

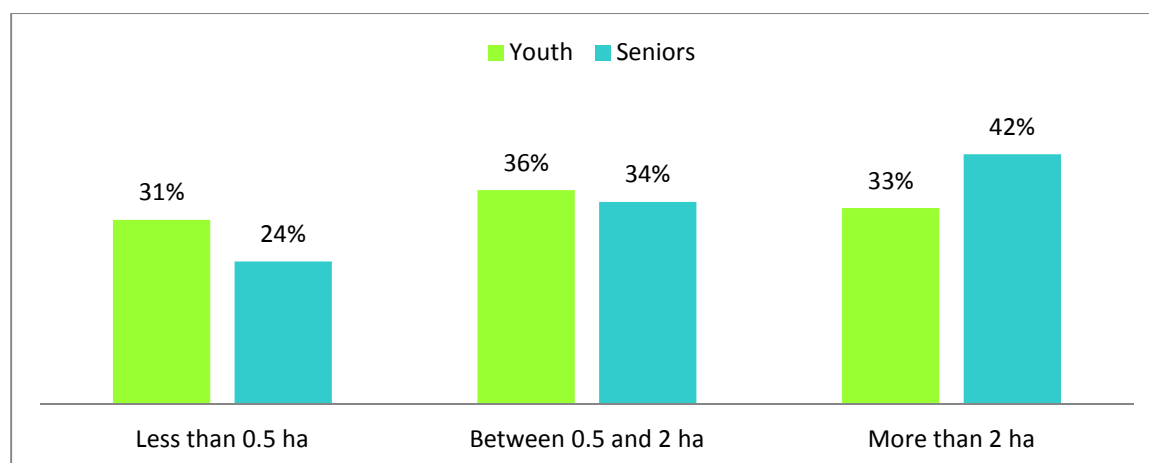


Figure 2 : Distribution of areas owned by youth and seniors

...less and less land acquired by clearing and improvement. According to PECF survey (Burnod et al. 2014), juniors as seniors' access to land follow the same dynamics: two-third of households acquired at least one plot through inheritance, half of them purchased at least one plot and 10% benefited from at least a donation (Deschênes, 2014).

However, an exception is noticed for cleared land. Youth relies less on clearing than seniors (4% of young households against 17% for seniors) and, if so, they develop smaller land areas (0.65 ha against 1.58 ha for their elders) (table #1). These data demonstrate an increasing land pressure in the studied communes. Testimonies gathered in Ambohimiarivo cross-checked this situation, specifying that vacant and ownerless land is scarce, even does not exist.

This point underlines a real problem on land distribution. Some land can be uncultivated but are very often already appropriated by a private individual/structure or controlled by the state. This is the case of an area of about ten hectares in Ambohimiarivo. Property of the state, it has been classified as a land reserve for investors but has never been allocated so far¹⁴. Youth

¹³ This disparity cannot be explained by the age. Within a young household, the assumption that the younger have less land, and the elder more land thanks to capitalization process, is not so obvious and suggests that the pathways to increase land asset are limited.

¹⁴ The government intended to give this area to agricultural investors but since the political crisis, the project was interrupted.

would like to get access to this area but nor the current policy guidelines neither existing procedures seem to go to that direction.

Table 1: Frequency of households that have access to at least one plot by access mode and average area acquired in this way

	Purchase		Inheritance		Donation		Clearing and Improvement	
	Households	Average area acquired	Households	Average area acquired	Households	Average area acquired	Households	Average area acquired
Seniors	56%	1.6 ha	64%	1.44 ha	11%	0.63 ha	17%	1.58 ha
Youth	57%	1.21 ha	66%	1.07 ha	11%	0.73 ha	4%	0.65 ha

...One-third of youth do not inherit land, more than a half buy land. Two third of the young households have inherited land but, unlike the older ones, they ended up with smaller land areas (1.07 ha to 1.44 ha for the older).

Above all, one third of the young households have not inherited any land. More precisely, 41% of the youth have not obtained any agricultural plot. This is not new, this trend was the same for the previous generation (43% of the seniors have not inherited agricultural land).

Donations allow 10% of the young households to access to land. Nevertheless, the households that have nor inherited nor enjoyed donation of agricultural plot still represent 35% of the young households. They can practice agricultural activities only if they rent, borrow or buy land.

Indeed, more than a half of the young household buy land (57%¹⁵). This ratio varies strongly according to the local contexts: 28% of the young households bought at least one plot in Manandona in the Vakinankaratra against 70% in Ampanihy in the Menabe (Deschênes, 2014). On average, the youth bought smaller plots than their eldest (1.21 ha to 1.6 ha for the seniors). These purchases are mainly on rice field (43% of the young households bought at least one rice field), then on housing plot (27%) and then plot allocated to annual crops other than rice (14%) (Deschênes, 2014).

Differences in land access contribute to explain inequality amongst young households. Those who enjoyed family's support (inheritance, donation) have in average more land than those who invest capital (purchase) or labour (slash and burn) to establish their property¹⁶. The first ones represent 39% of households and have an average of 1.24 ha whereas the second ones

¹⁵ More precisely, a quarter of households have formed their property only through the market.

¹⁶ The first group represent 39% of the households and have in average 1.24 ha while the second one represent 27% of the households and have on average 1.15 ha. Those who combine inheritance, donation, purchase and development (33% of the young households) have in average 2.09 ha.

represent 27% of households and have an average of 1.15 ha. Those who can combine the various access mode (inheritance, donation, market and clearing/improvement) have an average of 2.09 ha (they represent 33% of households).

Table 2: Frequency of households and average area by land access mode

	Purchase and/or clearing/improvement only		Inheritance and/or donation only		Combination of different land access mode	
	Households	Area acquired	Households	Area acquired	Households	Area acquired
Seniors	26%	2.25 ha	36%	1.62 ha	39%	2.61 ha
Youth	27%	1.15 ha	39%	1.24 ha	33%	2.09 ha

...Rental agreements, sharecropping or temporary free access¹⁷ allow 15% of the household to extend their land area. These land agreements are not only dedicated to landless farmers. About 15% of the households access to land that way. The large majority (80%) are already landowners. Thus, on average, the land cultivated under these land agreements represents 37% of the household's total cultivated area (against 44% for the senior who, thanks to better assets, are able to get larger plots, Andriamanalina et al., 2013). Amongst all the farmers having these temporary land access, 53% are involved in rental or sharecropping contracts, 46% borrow land from neighbours or family for free and 9% enjoy use rights from their parents¹⁸. Solidarity plays here an important role for youth.

A diversified land patrimony. Youth are not relegated to poor-quality land (usually in the hills) but have access to diversified land like their elders. According to the location, they can develop different crops: for example, with water control in low-lands, irrigated manually on the *baiboho* (recent alluvial soils), rain-fed on the hills, etc. Nevertheless, they have less land in terms of area.

Table 3: Frequency of households and owned average areas by location

	Plain/lowland		Baiboho		Plateau		Hills	
	Households	Average area	Households	Average area	Households	Average area	Households	Average area
Seniors	36%	0.48	8%	0.48	49%	0.49	7%	0.05
Youth	39%	0.25	5%	0.25	43%	0.25	13%	0.05
Total	37%	0.42	7%	0.42	48%	0.42	8%	0.05

(Deschênes, 2014)

¹⁷ They borrow land for free from friends or family.

¹⁸ Young households do fewer rental or sharecropping than their elders but lend land from friends and family more frequently (73% of the seniors practice sharecropping or rental agreements and 28% borrow land for free).

...Limited land access for young women. Like other African countries, in rural areas, gaining land access is more difficult for women than men (FAO, IFAD, MIJARC, 2012). In Madagascar, no law discriminates women regarding land access but in practice strong inequalities exist in the families and the local communities (Droy et al., 2010).

Only 5% of the young households are managed by women (against 15% for the senior households). Differences in land access clearly appear regarding inheritance. About 70% of the households ran by women did not inherit land (against 22% for the ones ran by men) (Tablea 4). However, they obtained more donations (20% of the households managed by women obtained at least one donation against 10% of those managed by men). This is notably the case for divorced women that can receive land from their parents or brothers.

Tablea 4: Frequency of households by mode of land access and gender of the household head

	Purchase	Inheritance	Donation	Clearing/improvement
Male Head	57.13	67.50	10.19	4.18
Female Head	52.41	29.59	20.31	5.22
Total	56.91	65.69	10.67	4.23

(Deschênes, 2014)

Moreover, whatever the way they access to land, female household heads have less land area than male household head. Indeed, 70% of the households managed by women have less than 0.5ha (against 29% of the ones ran by men) and 47% have even less 0.05ha (against 5% of the ones ran by men) (Deschênes, 2014). Women value their small plots by cultivating annual crops (rice, corn) or doing market gardening.

6. Land access: an obstacle to youth integration in agriculture?

...land access, an impediment, but not the only one. The Malagasy rural youth have a smaller land access than their elders (in quantity and quality) due to land fragmentation, late inheritance from the family and an unequal land repartition. But this issue, shared with lots of countries (Laurin-Dansereau, 2007; FAO, IFAD, MIJARC, 2012), is linked to other constraints. Roger (23 years old, student and farmer) and Felix (household head, farmer, cattle breeder, storekeeper and sports coach) summarize well the youth's point of view during the interviews: "We are proud to be farmer but, nowadays, we cannot say that we are doing fully this job. We would like to do it full-time, to really earn money from it and, above all, to have enough capital and land to develop our activities and to be empowered". Young people underline that their setting up or their investment in agriculture are limited by¹⁹ :

- **lack of capital to start and develop their farm.** Like their elders, few young households access credit (16% of the households²⁰). If they contract slightly more credit than the older households, unlike them, they ask more for informal credit (three quarters for the youth against one third for the senior)²¹. The youth of Ambohimiarivo explain that they fear formalities and they struggle to supply the guarantee that the formal institutions ask. For the Malagasy farmers (young or not), the high interest rates (70% to 100% for usurer, 14% to 20% for formal institution) are not the main obstacle; the most important for them is to access to credit in time and through simple formality (Droy, 1993). According to the responsible of the Agricultural extension services of Ambohimiarivo, some financial institutions try to simplify those procedures but they have not a national coverage;
- **need in agricultural training.** According to the interviewed youth in Ambohimiarivo, their parents thought that the CEPE²² is enough to run activities in the rural areas. But the youth ask for specialized training to professionalize themselves, to increase the yields and, this way, their revenues. Some specialized centres provide training but they are located far from the commune. Also, some agricultural organisations, funded by development projects, regularly offer training but interviewed youth were not members of these ones;
- **insecurity in rural areas and difficulties to capitalise.** These last years and despite the end of the political crisis in 2014²³, thefts are more and more frequent (Rabevohitra and Razanamavo, 2011). Very common for cattle²⁴, they now also concern pig and poultry farming and agricultural crops. According to the eldest, these thefts discourage youth to invest and produce. Due to several thefts, some young households were strongly affected and had to migrate;

¹⁹ Ranked by the youth of Ambohimiarivo.

²⁰ The differences between communes vary strongly according to the presence of microfinance institutions and development projects easing credit access.

²¹ Usurers, family, friends, storekeepers.

²² Certificate delivered at the end of the primary cycle.

²³ The end of the crisis took the form of a return to constitutional order in January 2014 but the political situation is not completely stable (Pellerin, 2014).

²⁴ Zebus have a social role. In addition to be used for rituals and sacrifices, they symbolise power and wealth. They also have an economic role as they are important for ploughing, soil fertilisation, meat consumption and hoarding money in nature. However zebus are more and more frequently stolen by *dahalo*, highway bandits.

- **low prices for agricultural products.** According to the young people in Ambohimiarivo, the low availability of land is not a constraint for high profit crops... but these latter are rare. In the locality, market gardening and especially tomatoes production are only seasonal and often low paid;
- **a low participation in existing professional organisation.** In Ambohimiarivo, due to prejudice and habitudes, few young people become members of farmer organisation led mostly by the older farmers. According to the PECF study, 26% of the young household heads belong to an association (against 36% of the senior) and half of them to an agricultural organisation. This participation can help getting advantages such as training, inputs, support to develop commercialisation, etc.

...Migration as a strategy. If some young people stay in the village and diversify their activities, others opt for migration to avoid the difficulties of farming activities or to capitalise and reinvest later in agriculture (through the purchase of one plot for example).

According to the young people's point of view in Ambohimiarivo, 70% of the youth of the commune would have migrated to town. The majority works in the informal sector as domestic workers, carriers, and street vendors, a minority also falls into delinquency. However this migration is often temporary (few months or years). Young people try to capitalise and to get back to their village to invest in agriculture or other activities. The reasons to get back to their village are multiple: the precarious living conditions in town, the difficult work tasks, the strong employers' authority, the fear to lose access to family land and, like other countries (Lestage, 1995) and despite the constraints of rural livelihood, the strong attachment to their families and territories. Then, after a certain period spent in town, agriculture can be reconsidered and perceived as the most convenient activity in a difficult socio-economic environment or even, for a minority well endowed, perceived as a profitable activity.

In Ambohimiarivo, few young people definitively migrate to look for available and under-exploited land. According to the eldest, from the first Republic (under the President Tsiranana) until now, settling programs for young people on new territories were implemented by successive governments but as all of them failed, young people do not want to join them. Indeed, thanks to such program, some people of Ambohimiarivo were settled in a remote commune from 1970 to 1990²⁵. They received land, a start-up funding, bicycles and even a gendarmerie unit were implemented. But all came back to Ambomihiarivo due particularly to too frequent thefts in this remote location. For such projects of internal migrations to be successful, youth and seniors of Ambohimiarivo give priority to security, then to establishment of schools, health and road infrastructures.

8. Conclusive recommendations

²⁵ Such projects took place in other parts of Madagascar from the first Republic until now (fourth Republic), for instance in the Middle West

Public policies should better consider the youth and the challenges they face as history has shown that youth can strongly contribute to social cohesion as to political destabilisation (Pavageau, 1981; White, 2012).

The different existing policies (General policy of the State, or youth, rural development, labor or agricultural policies) should be more specific regarding actions to conduct for the youth and more global regarding the links between the various sectors. Indeed, youth's integration in agriculture relies inter alia on a secure land access, specialised training, a tailor-made credit access and the reduction of insecurity and thefts in the rural countryside. The youth should participate in the formulation of these policies or, at least, should be consulted. To give them the chance to actively contribute to these debates and to undertake local initiatives, they have to be empowered thanks to a better access to capital, land, markets, information and training. The creation of youth associations should also be supported as well as the integration of youth in existing associations led by seniors.

Regarding land issues, some dispositions could be undertaken to help the youth:

- to stay on their territories, on which they have knowledge (on soils, agricultural practices, etc.) but also social networks and, consequently, access to solidarity and insurance networks (they can borrow land for free, they share the family house, they get monetary or material support from their parents, etc);
- to optimise the use of small land area through technical support to develop specific activities such as market gardening, pig farming, etc;
- to get a better land access through market – the case of more than a half of the young households – thanks to :
 - concrete action to legalise sharecropping and tenant farming, forbidden since the 1970's (Andriamanalina et al., 2013) ;
 - strengthening of information devices on market and of secure transactions, notably at the level of the communal land office ;
 - consolidation of land tax in order to create incentives for landowner to value, rent out or sell their plots;
- to improve land access through the redistribution of under or non-valuated land, notably the State-owned land. These types of land should be identified in an inventory and transferred to the commune or/and to the youth. The types of redistribution and actions accompanying them (credit access, etc) must avoid the traps faced by the former settling programs and take the lessons from other international experiences (Cotula et al., 2006). The objective is first of all to ease land access at local level.
- to consolidate existing rural migration and not to try to organize them with top-down approaches. In some localities, no more land is available and migration can be a relevant option. Instead of trying to repeat top-down settling programs, capitalisation on the reasons explaining the failure of the top-down state program as the success of private initiatives has to be done (Projer, etc.);
- to enhance secure land rights for youth through:

- the strengthening of information access on tools and laws available at local level such as the local land office, the land certification, etc (Burnod and al., 2014);
- the regulation of large scale land investment (Andriamanalina and Burnod, 2013) to make sure that local land rights are respected and other business models able to integrate young farmers are promoted ;
- the revision of the costs and formalities to up-date the legal land rights (ownership transfer taxes) (Andrianirina-Ratsialonana and Legendre, 2011).

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